



B.A.R.G. News

Volume 19 Issue 9

VK3BML

October 1996

DDI STRIKES AGAIN !

The Tower Mission Force descended upon my QTH en masse one Saturday afternoon recently, thrust me and my faithful ferocious dog, PeeJay, contemptuously aside and proceeded to turn my peaceful domicile into a disaster area. The two-section wind-up tower was hurled up into the sky and lassooed with steel ropes, members of the Forces slithered about in the vast mud slough into which they had rapidly converted my lush green lawn, and they threatened me with grievous bodily harm if I dared interfere with their planned activities. I am not normally a nervous person but those five hard men unnerved me with their grim faces and glacial eyes; they were dangerous men: Cliff "Killer" Bilston (alias 3CCB), Les "Sailor" Snibson (alias 3JEM), Richard "Lefty" Voss (alias 3JFL) and Chris (No Alias yet, so I won't give his full name!). What's that you say? I've only named four men! That's all right - I've left the worst till the last! He slunk into the back yard like a shadowy ghost..(that's pretty hard to do in broad daylight!) It was Doug Kay (alias 3KAY).. I know that's not much of an alias.. but I learnt his true identity the moment he opened his mouth. He glared at me and at the tower as it leant precariously like the one at Pisa and snarled from the corner of his

mouth, "Go on! Say it! Say it!" "Say what?" asked I. He growled: "Say, DOUG DID IT! That's what everyone says whenever things go wrong! DOUG DID IT! DOUG DID IT! DDI!" He prodded me in the chest with his forefinger. "If a guy's tower falls down



like this one will, everyone says, 'DDI! DOUG DID IT! If a linear amplifier blows up or the owner is electrocuted, they send for the cops and shout, "DOUG DID IT" With a swagger he left me to go and to supervise the setting up of the beam on the tower and to boss around the other hard men. When they had erected the tower to their satisfaction they snapped at me, "Well, what are you standing there for, dummy!.. Go into the shack and check the SWR!" I trembled and raced into the shack. Some minutes later I returned in tears. "It's no

good", I blubbered. "The SWR is too high!" They glared first at me and then at one another. Someone said, The 20 meters section of the driven element is too long!"

Someone else bellowed, "It's OK - it's the reflector!" "No, it's not the reflector; it's the driven element and it is too long!", I put in, forgetting myself. "SHUT UP, MORON!" they all yelled, turning on me. "Who do you think you are to have an opinion? You only own the thing!" Doug snarled at us all. "The flaming thing is too short." But after a great deal of shouting and fisticuffs, they decided that it was too long and they shortened it. I checked the SWR again. It was worse. Doug sneered. "Told you so, you idiots! Lengthen it!" So they did and this time the SWR was correct. The hard men left and last of all, with a few more sneers, Doug left. As he left he paused, leered at me and muttered darkly, Remember I live up to my reputation. DDI!" That cryptic remark puzzled me for a while. Ten days later the winds struck and my beam twisted around inside its holding bolts so that it was 90 degrees out of track with the rotator. Someone had not tightened the bolts! But who was the culprit? Well, I have my suspicions. Sheer logic was my guide. Since I never make mistakes, I must have tightened the bolts originally, therefore someone else had UNTightened them! The conclusion was obvious - DDI!

de ARTHUR VK3ENT



BALLARAT AMATEUR RADIO GROUP

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TECH OFFICER	IAN McDONALD	VK3AXH			
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AWARDS MANAGER	RON WATKINS	VK3ZHH	667200		327141
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	LES SNIBSON	VK3JEM			347815
BUILDINGS					
HAMVENTION CO-ORD.	TOM GEORGE	VK3DMK	327234		
	CHRIS KENSELL	SWL	327888		327888

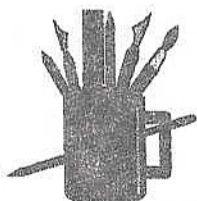
LIFE MEMBERS: MAURIE BATT VK3XEX (SK)
 JIM WRIGHT VK3CFB
 KEVIN HUGHES VK3WN

IAN McDONALD VK3AXH
 GEORGE SMALL VK3DKJ (SK)
 PHIL SEDDON VK3AQM
 STAN WIDGERY VK3SE

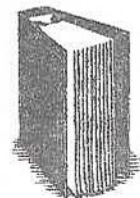
CLUB STATION VK3 BML

CLUB ADDRESS :-
 THE SECRETARY BARG INC.,
 BOX 1261,
 MAIL CENTRE,
 BALLARAT 3354,
 AUSTRALIA.

REPEATERS			
VK3RBA	(VOICE)	146.750	
VK3RBS	(VOICE)	146.900	
VK3RPC	(PACKET)	144.750	
VK3RBU	(VOICE)	438.475	
VK3RMB	(BEACON)	432.535	
VK3RBV	(ATV)	426.250	



MINUTES



THE MEETING WAS OPENED BY PRESIDENT GORDON AT 7:40 PM. WHO WELCOMED ALL MEMBERS AND VISITORS.

APOLOGIES VK3.....LDC,FMC,ADB,DS,BVI,LBA & VAL.

THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING WERE CIRCULATED AND CONFIRMED.

(CAZ / JFL)

CORRESPONDENCE OUT: EXAMINERS WROTE TO WIA EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER THE LAST EXAM.

(DMK / ZHH)

IN: HAMVENTION FEES

TREASURERS REPORT.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT :-

NEWSLETTER POSTAGE VK3JFL \$37.90

JOHN GRAHAM PRINTING \$32.00

CONSTITUTION. \$54.00

MILK & COFFEE \$ 8.50

(AAI / BNC)

COMMITTEE

NEW CONSTITUTION HAS BEE RE-PUBLISHED. THEY ARE AVAILABLE FOR ALL FINANCIAL MEMBERS AT NO COST.

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED FOR JOTA 19th & 20th OCTOBER AT PAX HILL (PAP) FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE.

CHRISTMAS BREAKUP - CITY OVAL HOTEL FRIDAY 13th DECEMBER.

QSL MANAGER NONE IN - NONE OUT. THANKS DARYL.

SCRAMBLE 4 - 8 PEOPLE EACH NIGHT.

EDUCATION WAITING FOR REPLY ON EXAMINERS LETTER SENT TO WIA.

NEWS LETTER URGENTLY REQUIRING MORE ARTICLES.

NET "IT GOES"

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE VK3RBA OFF DUE TO RECENT POWER STORM.

HAMVENTION TOM VK3DMK REPORTED ON THIS YEARS HAMVENTION. JOBS HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED TO VARIOUS PEOPLE LEADING UP, AND ON THE HAMVENTION DAY. HELP FROM MEMBERS IS STILL REQUIRED ON THE SUNDAY.

CLIFF VK3CCB REPORTED ON THE FOXHUNTS OUTLINING THE PROGRAM FOR THIS YEARS EVENTS.

BBS WORKING WELL ! AROUND 23 USERS, WELL DONE DOUG !!!

FACILITIES RUSSELL SQUARE EXTENSION. COST \$26000 PLUS \$10000 TO JOIN THEIR GROUP.

IF THE CLUB BORROWS :-

\$ 30000

\$ 20000

\$ 10000

THE REPAYMENTS WOULD BE OVER 10 YEARS :-

\$ 4500 PA

\$ 3300 PA

\$ 1600 PA

MT. CLEAR HALL - IN NEED OF TERRIBLE REPAIR, BUT LAND IS VALUABLE.

GRANTS - GORDON SUGGESTED OBSERVATORY SIGHT TO APPLY FOR A GRANT AS THE CLUB IS UNSURE OF WHAT WE WANT.

THE CLUB MEMBERS VOICED THEIR OPINION AGAINST RUSSELL SQUARE.

MOTION IAN (AXH) MOVED TO GO WITH THE GRANT AT OBSERVATORY SIGHT. (2nd AAP) CARRIED.

MOTION REG (CAZ) MOVED THE MOTION CONGRATULATING LES (JEM) AND CHRIS FOR THE WORK THEY HAVE DONE. (2nd DMK). CARRIED.

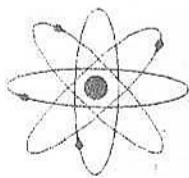
FUND RAISING LES (JEM)- SUGGESTED THAT THE CONVENTION IS THE BEST FUND RAISER. FIRST MEETING IN 1997 - A FUND RAISING COMMITTEE IS TO BE DISCUSSED.

GENERAL BUSINESS. NONE.

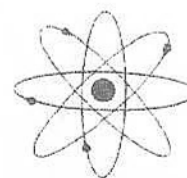
MEETING CLOSED 8:55 PM

NEXT MEETING. 25 th OCTOBER 1996.

CHEERS VK3 FGC(ACTING SECRETARY)



GOOD OLD AMATEUR INGENUITY DOES IT AGAIN.



FROM THE SHACK OF VK3YZR

Okay, well here we are again, Once more I've managed to put digits to tactile buttons and produce another filler piece article for the club magazine. This steamy episode, like the first, is but another example of goodole' amateur ingenuity in the face of adversity, or making do with what you've got when the good Reverend Doctor John Flynn, A.B. 'Banjo' Patterson and others no longer reside in one's wallet!

How did I get myself into this mess? Well, after buying one of those Dick Smith Mastercharger systems for my Hand held batteries, it killed them!! Well that was how it seemed, and the good people at Dick Smith wanted to be sure as well. After a few weeks of testing, under warranty too!, they declared the charger to be in good health and the test battery (mine) to be interred in the nearest land fill. (more on the land fill later!) With two dead batteries on hand I wondered if I just might be able to resurrect one good battery from the two.

Now, from the start this wasn't going to be an easy job, no battery packs that I know of come with a screw apart case. The first job was to prise the case halves apart carefully to see what goes on inside. The first case was prised apart with a couple of fine screw-drivers and, with a modicum of force, was soon in two pieces revealing the innermost secrets of Japanese technology and philosophy. For the second pack I decided to try and cut the glue along the joints before forcing the halves apart and this proved to be a better process, giving a cleaner separation along the joints.

The cells in the packs (Yaesu FNB-14, 7.2v 1000mAh by the way) where the same circumference as the standard AA cell batteries but about 15mm longer, and upon testing them it was revealed that three of them in each pack had died of short circuit. Curious, but not the same cells. I won't go into great lengths to describe the action of Cadmium crystal dendrites, suffice it to say that's what happened. So, this left me with six good cells from the two battery packs, just enough to make up one good pack! Yippee!!

Prising apart the cells was a fairly easy affair, but two points come to mind to be aware of. Firstly, the cells are joined together by small strips of tin, spot welded to the ends of the cells to form the circuit. Prising these strips away from the ends of the dud cells left me with some material to rejoin the good cells, simply by crimping the strips together and soldering the joint to ensure a good connection. Secondly, prising the cells apart can tear the thin insulation they're wrapped in, exposing the negatively biased case. so the re-application of some heat shrink tubing may be called for here. Be aware though that most heat shrink tubing you can buy is much thicker than the stuff on the cells, so make sure you can fit it all back inside the case when your done! One tip is that you only have to insulate every other cell, providing you have sufficient separation to prevent short circuit!!

Glue? what glue!? Yes, Right, Okay, now to hold it all together somehow! The Glue that Yaesu uses seems to be based on a hide glue, the stuff that shoe makers use, and as such tends to re-adhere quite well if there's enough of it left! After a night clamped in the vice and a day wrapped in a pack compression strap (a strip of nylon webbing with a fast buckle at one end) it all seems to have stuck together reasonably well, although I wouldn't want to drop it from any height! As far as a super glue goes, it releases some fairly nasty chemicals which love to eat copper etc., so you could expect the whole lot to stop working one day for no apparent reason and I wouldn't like to try and re-open the case at any time!

And the result? The pack was put in the charger and took the usual amount of time to charge from flat, about two hours, and finished up with a full charge of around 8.8 volts. During charging it went as high as 10.4 volts before peaking some where a little way above this. So far so good! In use it lasted about three days, scanning Police, Fire and Amateur frequency's for about 6 to 7 hours a day with the occasional QSO contact in between. After a week of use, charging, waiting for the other battery to go flat and three days of use as described above its going well and showing all the signs of a healthy battery pack! All in all a worth while exercise, considering I now have a useful battery instead of two piece's of land fill! It's not a job for the faint hearted though so be careful!

By the way, although I've made some reference's to land fill, I would suggest that there would be a more preferable method of disposal for these types of battery cells as the Nickel and Cadmium contained inside are quite poisonous heavy metals. Just where you can dispose of them I have no idea, I guess the same place you take your bung Smoke Detectors for disposal of the radio active element would be a good place, but I haven't found one for those yet either!



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AND COMMUNICATIONS**
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Check out the new castrol gas engine
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If Diesel's your scene then the great
CASTROL RX SUPER SAE 15W-40 has
been developed for your vehicle and is equally
successful and beneficial in cars using leaded
and unleaded petrol.
\$65.65 for 20 litres (inc tax).

We've also got **ROUNDUP HERBICIDE** at a
good price.

73 de Bill VK3PH

THIS NEWSLETTER HAS BEEN PRINTED BY

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Screenprinting
Tee Shirt Prints

John Graham
053-391097

BALLARATS' PACKET BBS

THE LATEST BBS FOR BALLARAT STARTED ON THE 6th OF JUNE 1996 - THE SYSTEM USES A N IBM COMPATIBLE 386 DX40 COMPUTER WITH 4 MEG OF RAM A VGA MONITOR AND 4 COM PORTS WITH ONE PORT FOR A MOUSE.

THE BBS RUNS ON TWO FREQUENCIES - 144.750 AND 147.575 MHz. ON 144.750 IT USES A BAYCOM STYLE MODEM WITH A DSE COMMANDER RADIO WHICH FOWARDS INFORMATION TO VK3BBS IN MELBOURNE AND VK3ATL IN GEELONG. ON 147.575 IT USES A MFJ 1270 TNC AND A FM 828 RADIO FORWARDING INFORMATION TO VK3SSS IN HORSHAM. THE THIRD PORT IS USED AS A WIRE LINK AS I HAVE GOT THE THE BBS CONNECTED TO ANOTHER COMPUTER TO ALLOW REMOTE OPERATION.

WHEN I STARTED TO RUN THE BBS I WAS USING MY OWN COMPUTER BUT FOR SOME REASON IT STOPPED WORKING BUT AS I WAS IN THE PROCESS OF BUILDING ANOTHER COMPUTER AT THE SAME AS THE FIRST (A 384DX40 WITH 4 MEG) I WAS ABLE TO KEEP THE BBS RUNNING.

THE BBS COMPUTER COST ME A TOTAL OF ABOUT \$70 AS I HAD MOST OF THE PARTS HERE. I GOT A 386DX40 MOTHER BOARD FOR \$30 AND THE N 4 MEG OF RAM FOR \$40 AND ITS ALL IN WITH A XT POWER SUPPLY AND CASE WHILE THE HARD DRIVE IS A 50 MEG IDE TYPE.

THE BBS GETS APPROX. BETWEEN 100-300 MESSAGES PER DAY RANGING FROM MODS FOR RADIOS, INFO ON PROPAGATION, CQ CALL, ASSORTED PROGRAMS AND MANY OTHER THINGS.

THERE IS ALSO A SERVER CALLED TELETEXT THAT IS SIMILAR TO THE TELETEXT ON TELEVISION AND TO ACCESS IT, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS TYPE TT TO USE IT.

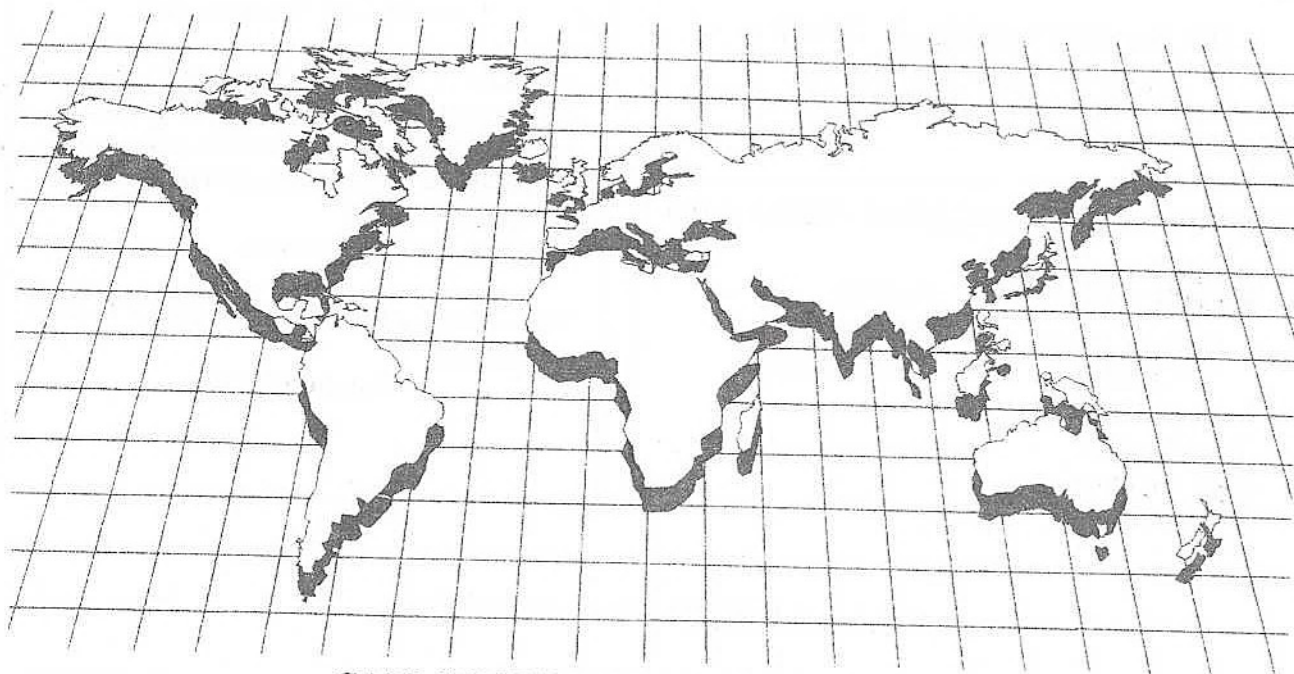
I WOULD LIKE TO THANK BILL JOHNSON (VK3DWJ) OF MIDLAND COMPUTER SERVICES AT 15 DAWSON ST NTH AS HE DONATED THE 50 MEG HARD DRIVE THAT THE BBS USES.

DOUG VK3KAY



HAMVENTION '96

OCTOBER 26th & 27th



CALL IN ON VK3RBA 146.750 MHz.

SATURDAY 26th
FOX & SNIFFER HUNTS.
EVENING COUNTER TEA.

SUNDAY 27th
DISPLAYS AND SALES - 9.00 AM
HOME BREW COMPETITION
FOX AND SNIFFER HUNTS.

BALLARAT SHOW GROUNDS
ENTER FROM WHITE AVE (OFF HOWITT STREET)

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT TOM VK3DMK 053-327234 (BH) OR CHRIS 053 327888

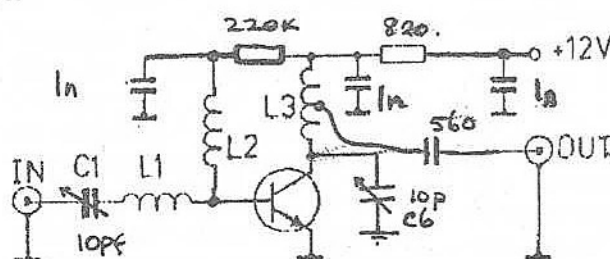


An Antenna Pre-Amplifier for Weather Satellites or 2 Metres.

VK3BNC.

Well here is an "addon" for the popular Weather Fax decoder featured in this magazine by Ian VK3AXH. There appear to be a range of antennas and receivers being used for this project and I think that this little pre-amp will top off your results and really impress the grand kids. It will comfortably tune 2 Metres if you are looking for a suitable low noise amp for the job.

The amplifier design has been structured towards optimum low noise. Features being a series tuned input to minimise signal loss, choke fed bias to reduce signal loss and bias resistor noise, tuned output and low impedance fed to the cable to reduce instability. The overall gain of the amplifier is in the order of 16dB which should be more than adequate.



L1 + L3 5T 20 * 6mm DIAM.

L2 16T 28 * 3mm DIAM.

L3 Tap AT 1T

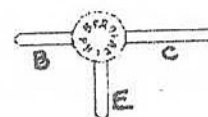
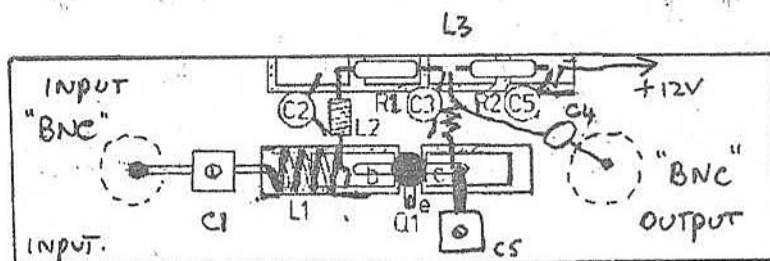
Construction: A circuit board layout is attached and should work well with the "Iron on" technique as there are no fiddley little bits or you can use the "stick on lands" technique.

The board is designed to lay on the box cover and the input and output "Bnc" connectors mount through the cover and "pcb" to hold it all in place. Now the parts you should be able to "scrounge" from the likes of an old carphone. The transistor can be any of the following; BFR90/91, BFY90, BFW92. Remember talk to us before buying. Coil wire will be available for the Monday night group along with the usual assistance.

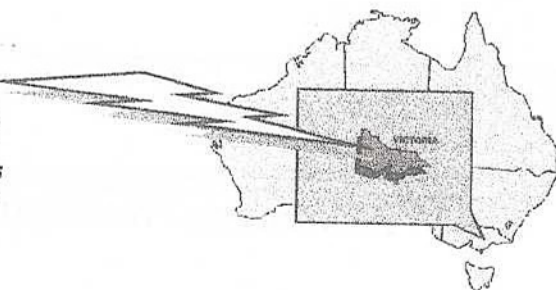
Alignment and testing: Firstly check things over and look for shorts and bad connections. Now connect an ammeter in the supply rail and check the current drawn. It should be somewhere from 3 to 8mA. Next step connect it to a signal source and tune up for max at the Satellite frequency. OK now set it up in the final position with the antenna and your receiver connected and re-peak when the satellite comes over. Ideally the pre-amplifier should be mounted at the antenna itself however if your antenna is not too far from the operating position then that will do. If you want details on feeding twelve volts up the cable to the amplifier then have a chat on Monday night.

Perhaps our next article can focus on suitable antennas.

73's Bob. VK3BNC.



96/10 08



Our American Connection

from BARG Member - Greg - N9NAY - Wheeling Ill. U.S.A.

(Greg's letter was dated the 26th. April 1996. - Ed.)

THOUGHTS FROM THE TOPSIDE

Well then .. the question you might be asking. Who is N9NAY and why is he on the B.A.R.G. membership list ? This is a question I had to ask myself after many mailings of the Newsletter and nary a bit of input on my behalf. With that thought I wish to contribute some input whether or not it has been solicited.

Things here in the shack have been much less quiet than normal, thanks to some very poor satellite conditions. We are all anxious for Phase 3D to make it up and make the difference. Last heard, this may not happen until September of this year. The HF bands have also been quite non-productive, especially at night, with the exception of some activity on 40 metres. Good news to report on the VHF front quite a few excellent tropospheric ducting opportunities due to the temperature inversions that come up from the South this time of year. This station made many good contacts at 144.200 USB last weekend and we hope that this will last. ... one contact in particular was with a station operating QRP - 450 miles to the South !

American astronaut Shannon Doherty has been much more content than her predecessor (Norm Thagard) aboard the MIR Space Station. Interesting that a female can stand being locked up with two men for any length of time. Perhaps she has rearranged the furniture, hung some curtains and added some colour to the place, and I am sure they have had to shave and bathe on a regular basis these days. The good news is that she occasionally uses the radio on 144.550 simplex to chat as she passes overhead. Dozens of contacts have been made with her in the past three weeks. She uses the call sign ROMIR as she hadn't enough time prior to the mission to test for her own station license.

Last November the Space Shuttle Atlantis was making an early morning pass across the sky to the North, and after calling repeatedly, I heard nothing. I adjusted my azimuth and elevation, checked my tracking software, and put a bit more fire in the wire, but still no reply to my CQs.

My nine year old daughter, Courtney, was sitting at my side watching me call and wondering why I was getting nowhere. I glanced over at her and saw a wishful little girl's face light up as I handed her the microphone and told her to try. She keyed the microphone, stuck her lips to it and said - "Atlantis this is N9NAY". To my surprise the mission Commander responded with "N9NAY this is Atlantis (followed by his callsign.)" At first I just dropped my head onto the desk wondering 'why her and not me?' and then the pride of a father took over as I congratulated her on her first Shuttle contact. Needless to say my other daughter Carolyn was quite distraught at the fact that her sister had made contact and she hadn't. I sat and watched her tears thinking we could never pull this off twice on the same mission. I noted that the next pass would be equally visible and we went to the kitchen to have our breakfast. When it was time for the next rise, I invited Carolyn into the shack and sat her down beside me. As the shuttle eclipsed the horizon I heard one of the mission specialists using the SAREX rig and crossed my fingers. I waited until the preceding QSO was over and whispered to Carolyn to hold the microphone, push the button and say "Atlantis N9YOL (N9YOL is my XYL's call)" After a second the astronaut replied with his call and commented that if she had made her license he was very impressed. Again another solid hit. Needless to say we spent the remainder of the morning reviewing the audio tapes, listening to the contacts over and over again and then applying for QSL cards. If there is a lesson to be learned it might be ' Better bait catches bigger fish !'.

I will close now. I hope that you will all enjoy your Winter as we hope to enjoy our Summer. If anyone is interested I am best reached on Packet BBS via REQSAT at :
N9NAY@W9ZMR.EN52VA.NIL.USA.NOAM
My Internet address is: scoobydu@ix.netcom.com
(note - All lower case please.)

73 to all. and remember- when climbing to the top of the tower - it's not the fall that hurts it's the sudden stop ! Wear a safety belt. (Sorry I can't attend the meetings but my Auto is at the garage.)

LOOK**QSL
CARDS**

QSL CARDS are being held by Daryl VK3XDQ
(QTHR) for the following stations:

VK3AIG VK3CCB VK3DCS VK3FAQ

VK3LU VK3CJB VK3KQB VK3EHP

VK3DET VK3CFH VK3CAZ VK3BNC

Cards can be collected at the BARG meetings or via
S.S.A.E. to VK3XDQ at P.O. Box 78

Newstead Vic. 3462



BARGAINS GALORE

ICOM IC215 - 2M FM

5 Channels fitted

\$ 75.00

ICOM IC215 - 2M FM

11 Channels fitted

\$130.00

TRANSAIR TW35 - VHF 6 Channel - No Mike or Xtals \$ 20.00

828A No Xtals \$40.00

828A No Xtals, Mike or Speaker \$40.00

828E No Xtals or Mike. \$40.00

PHILIPS MIKE 8 Pin - \$5.00

Daryl VK3XDQ ☎054-762689 (QTHR)



VALE

It is with deep regret that we record the passing of Vera Wright , the XYL of our Life Member Jim - VK3CFB, on Sunday the 6th. October 1996. Vera had been a patient sufferer for many years during the course of a long illness. B.A.R.G.members extend their sympathies to Jim and his family on their loss.



COMING EVENTS AND INFORMATION

October 25th
October 26th/27th
November 2nd
November 20th
2M Scramble

Club Net
WICEN Training
Construction Night

General Meeting.

Hamvention

WICEN Bike Ride, Help wanted.

Committee meeting

Sunday Nights 7.50pm 146.425 to 146.600 MHz.

logs posted to Daryl Quirk, P.O. Box 78, Newstead, 3462.

Thursday Nights 8pm. 3.610 +/- QRM

Last Wednesday each month.

Monday Nights at BRACE.



BARG.

THE BALLARAT AMATEUR RADIO GROUP INC.

A GROUP OF RADIO ENTHUSIASTS LICENSED TO EXPERIMENT
WITH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL RADIO COMMUNICATIONS ON AN AMATEUR BASIS.

NEW MEMBERS ALWAYS WELCOME.

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE BALLARAT AMATEUR RADIO GROUP INC.

B.A.R.G. NEWS

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